

Nebraska State Fair 2026: Dates, Tickets & Travel Guide



The **Nebraska State Fair 2026** returns to Grand Island from **August 28 through September 7, 2026**. This 11-day celebration brings together Nebraska agriculture, livestock, carnival rides, concerts, free entertainment, family attractions, competitions, food, and shopping.

Held at **Fonner Park**, the Nebraska State Fair is one of the state's biggest annual events and a major celebration of Nebraska's agricultural heritage.

What Is the Nebraska State Fair?

The Nebraska State Fair is an annual celebration of Nebraska's agriculture, people, traditions, and communities. Agriculture is at the heart of the event, with livestock shows, 4-H and FFA exhibits, agricultural competitions, educational displays, and demonstrations.

The fair also offers a large carnival midway, concerts, free grounds entertainment, family attractions, food vendors, shopping, motorsports, and special events. The 2026 event marks the **157th Nebraska State Fair**.

Nebraska State Fair 2026 Dates & Location

Here are the essential details for planning your visit.

- **Dates:** August 28 - September 7, 2026
- **Venue:** Fonner Park
- **Location:** Grand Island, Nebraska
- **Tickets:** [Check Tickets](#)

The 2026 Nebraska State Fair runs for **11 days**, ending on Labor Day, Monday, September 7.

Fonner Park is located in Grand Island, making the fair easy to reach from Interstate 80 and other major Nebraska highways.

What to Expect at the Nebraska State Fair 2026

There is enough happening across the fairgrounds to fill an entire day or more.

Agriculture and Livestock

Agriculture remains one of the biggest reasons to visit the Nebraska State Fair.

Visitors can see livestock competitions, 4-H and FFA exhibits, agricultural demonstrations, competitions, and educational displays.

The fair provides an opportunity to see Nebraska's agricultural traditions up close while learning more about where food and farm products come from.

Wade Shows Carnival

The **Wade Shows Carnival** brings the traditional midway experience to the Nebraska State Fair. Visitors can enjoy carnival rides, games, lights, and attractions for different ages.

Families can choose from rides for younger children, while thrill-seekers can look for larger rides and attractions.

Family Fun Zone

Families with children have plenty to explore at the **Family Fun Zone**.

The 2026 lineup includes **Activity Acres**, featuring a jumping pillow, a Hy-Vee mini grocery store, corn sandboxes, children's games, and Agri-Golf.

The area also features performances and interactive attractions throughout the day.

Canine Stars Stunt Dog Show

The **Canine Stars Stunt Dog Show** is scheduled daily during the 2026 fair.

The show combines trained dogs, athletic stunts, and family-friendly entertainment.

It is a good option for families looking for something beyond carnival rides and agricultural exhibits.

Free Entertainment

One of the advantages of the Nebraska State Fair is the amount of entertainment included around the grounds.

Performances take place on **four free stages** throughout the fairgrounds.

Visitors can find musicians, performers, cultural entertainment, and other acts without having to purchase a separate ticket for every performance.

Concerts

The Nebraska State Fair also features a major concert lineup at its larger venues. The 2026 schedule includes performers across several music genres.

One of the major Labor Day weekend concerts is **HARDY**, scheduled for Sunday, September 6.

Other major performances include **Shinedown with Dexter and The Moonrocks** on Saturday, September 5, as well as other concerts throughout the fair.

If you want to attend a particular concert, check the official schedule before choosing your fair date because concert tickets and seating arrangements can vary.

Truck and Tractor Pull

Motorsports fans can start the fair with the **Truck & Tractor Pull** on opening night.

The event is scheduled for **Friday, August 28 at 6 PM** at the State Fair Motorsports Park. It is a high-energy way to begin the 2026 Nebraska State Fair.

Ranch Rodeo

The **Ranch Rodeo** is another major event for visitors interested in Western and agricultural traditions.

The 2026 Ranch Rodeo is scheduled for **Saturday, September 5 at 5:30 PM**.

The event gives visitors a chance to see ranch skills and competition in a dedicated arena setting.

Crossroads Chaos

For visitors looking for something different, **Crossroads Chaos** brings figure-8 racing to the fair.

The event combines motorsports with the unpredictable action of figure-8 competition. It is one of the more unusual entertainment options at the 2026 fair.

Food and Vendors

Fair food is part of the Nebraska State Fair experience.

Visitors can find classic carnival favorites, snacks, desserts, drinks, meals, and other foods from vendors throughout the grounds.

The fair also features vendors selling Nebraska-made products, merchandise, crafts, agricultural products, and other goods.

Take some time to explore the vendor areas rather than limiting your visit to the midway.

Best Time to Visit the Nebraska State Fair

The best time to visit depends on the experience you want.

For a More Relaxed Visit

Weekdays can be a good choice for travelers looking for a less crowded fair experience.

Morning visits can also be useful if agriculture, livestock, and exhibits are your main priorities.

For Families

Earlier in the day gives families more time to explore the Family Fun Zone, agricultural exhibits, livestock areas, and free entertainment.

For Concerts

Plan your trip around the official concert schedule if live music is a priority.

Labor Day weekend typically brings a particularly lively atmosphere, but major performances can also mean larger crowds.

For Motorsports

Opening night is a strong choice for motorsports fans because the Truck & Tractor Pull starts the fair on August 28.

The Ranch Rodeo and other dirt events provide additional options later in the fair.

Nebraska State Fair 2026 Special Events

The fair includes numerous events beyond the main midway and concerts.

Some 2026 highlights include:

- **Truck & Tractor Pull:** August 28
- **County Fair Day:** August 29
- **Phil Wickham:** August 30
- **Fair-Tastic Friday:** September 4
- **Ranch Rodeo:** September 5
- **Shinedown:** September 5
- **HARDY:** September 6
- **Fiesta Latina:** September 6
- **Family and educational activities:** Throughout the fair

The schedule can change, so check the official fair calendar when planning your visit.

Travel Tips for Attending the Nebraska State Fair

A little planning can make your visit easier.

- **Check the daily schedule:** Events and performances vary by day.
- **Wear comfortable shoes:** The fairgrounds are large and involve plenty of walking.
- **Arrive early:** Morning hours are useful for agricultural exhibits and livestock.
- **Plan around concerts:** Popular performances can attract larger crowds.
- **Bring sun protection:** Late August and early September can still be warm.
- **Stay hydrated:** Spend breaks in shaded or indoor areas when needed.
- **Bring a light layer:** Temperatures can change after sunset.
- **Use the fair map:** Identify stages, livestock areas, food vendors, and major attractions before walking the grounds.
- **Buy official tickets:** The Nebraska State Fair has warned visitors about third-party ticket resellers and recommends purchasing through its official ticket channels.

- **Plan your transportation:** Grand Island is centrally located in Nebraska and accessible from I-80.
- **Allow extra time on major concert nights:** Traffic and parking can take longer when popular performances are scheduled.
- **Check attraction times:** Some shows run at specific times rather than continuously.

Getting to the Nebraska State Fair

The Nebraska State Fair takes place at **Fonner Park in Grand Island**.

Grand Island is located in central Nebraska along Interstate 80, making it accessible from Lincoln, Omaha, Kearney, North Platte, and other parts of the state.

For travelers flying into the area, **Central Nebraska Regional Airport** provides commercial air service.

Grand Island also has intercity bus connections, while the nearest Amtrak station is in **Hastings**, about 25 minutes south of Grand Island.

Parking at the Nebraska State Fair

Parking options are available around the fairgrounds.

Visitors should follow official signs and directions when arriving, particularly on concert nights and busy Labor Day weekend dates.

If you are attending a major concert or special event, allow additional time for parking and walking to the venue.

The fair has also worked on shuttle transportation options to help move fairgoers from off-site locations to the fair.

Things to Do Near the Nebraska State Fair

Grand Island gives visitors several opportunities to extend their trip beyond the fairgrounds.

Visit Stuhr Museum

Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer is one of Grand Island's best-known attractions.

The 200-acre living history museum includes a recreated prairie town, historic buildings, gardens, exhibits, and interpreters who bring Nebraska's pioneer history to life.

It is an especially good addition for travelers interested in Nebraska history and agriculture.

Explore Raising Nebraska

Raising Nebraska is a free interactive agricultural experience that explains how food moves from the farm to the table.

It fits naturally into a Nebraska State Fair itinerary because of the fair's strong agricultural focus.

Visit Island Oasis Water Park

Families visiting during the warmer part of the fair season can cool off at **Island Oasis Water Park**.

The six-acre water park includes a lazy river, wave pool, speed slides, and a zero-depth area.

Explore Downtown Grand Island

Grand Island's historic **Railside District** offers local restaurants, boutiques, antique shops, historic buildings, and other attractions.

It is a good place to explore after spending time at the fair.

Explore Grand Island Trails

Visitors who want some time outdoors can explore Grand Island's network of hiking and biking trails.

The city has numerous parks and recreation areas, providing a quieter alternative to the busy fairgrounds.

Where to Stay for the Nebraska State Fair

Grand Island is the most convenient place to stay during the Nebraska State Fair.

The city has hotels throughout the area, including accommodations near Fonner Park, Interstate 80, Highway 281, and other major roads.

Visitors attending major concerts should book early because demand can increase around popular performance dates.

Grand Island Tourism also highlights a range of lodging options throughout the city.

Is the Nebraska State Fair Worth Visiting?

The **Nebraska State Fair 2026** is a strong choice for travelers who want a state fair with a clear agricultural identity and plenty of entertainment.

The event combines livestock, 4-H and FFA programs, agriculture, carnival rides, family attractions, concerts, motorsports, free entertainment, food, and shopping.

Its Grand Island location also makes it easy to build a longer central Nebraska trip around the fair.

For families, agriculture enthusiasts, music fans, and travelers looking for a classic American state fair experience, the Nebraska State Fair offers plenty to see and do.

Conclusion

The **Nebraska State Fair 2026** takes place from **August 28 through September 7, 2026**, at Fonner Park in Grand Island.

From livestock and agricultural exhibits to carnival rides, family attractions, free entertainment, concerts, motorsports, fair food, and shopping, the 11-day event offers something for a wide range of visitors.

Before your trip, check the official Nebraska State Fair website for the latest **tickets, schedules, concerts, attractions, parking information, and visitor updates.**

Download your free Nebraska State Fair 2026 Guide and keep the essential dates, attractions, tickets, and travel tips handy.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is the Nebraska State Fair 2026?

The **Nebraska State Fair 2026** takes place from **August 28 through September 7, 2026**, in Grand Island, Nebraska.

Where is the Nebraska State Fair held?

The fair is held at **Fonner Park in Grand Island, Nebraska.**

How long does the Nebraska State Fair last?

The 2026 Nebraska State Fair runs for **11 days**, from August 28 through September 7.

What is the Nebraska State Fair known for?

The fair is known for **agriculture, livestock, 4-H and FFA exhibits, carnival rides, concerts, motorsports, family attractions, free entertainment, food, and shopping.**

What are the biggest attractions at the Nebraska State Fair 2026?

Major 2026 attractions and events include the **Wade Shows Carnival, Family Fun Zone, Canine Stars Stunt Dog Show, Truck & Tractor Pull, Ranch Rodeo, Crossroads Chaos, free stage entertainment, and major concerts.**

What can I do near the Nebraska State Fair?

Visitors can explore **Stuhr Museum, Raising Nebraska, Island Oasis Water Park, downtown Grand Island's Railside District, local trails, parks, and other central Nebraska attractions.**